

## The buck stops where?

Town council last week in a special council meeting, approved a \$324,000 loan to bail the non-profit group Halton Hills Gymnastics Centre (HHGC) out of financial difficulties.

The first knee-jerk reaction is to ask: when did the Town of Halton Hills become The Bank of Halton Hills?

However the move is not unprecedented. In 2006, the Town council approved a \$1.3 million loan to the Acton Agricultural Society— also a non-profit group— while that group was raising funds to build the Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre in Prospect Park.

And just recently council approved a loan for \$10,000 to the Halton Hills Arena Users Group (HHAUG) to allow that group to hire a fundraising consultant. The HHAUG, which had assured the Town it would raise \$2 million before April 2012 to help finance the \$29.2 million three-arena construction program, has raised only \$9,000 to date.

As well, the Town annually hands Links-2Care \$13,200 as part of its service contract agreement to provide its unique services to teens through the youth centres.

The Town argued that HHGC provides a similar unique service: gymnastics, and its participants are an unserved group— girls. Warren Harris, manager of Parks and Open Spaces, says the club's needs fulfilled the Town policy requirements for aiding a local group, and in turn HHGC provides a recreational sport that's growing in Halton and is not provided elsewhere to its extent in the community.

But at the same time, we wonder if the action will open the floodgates for other non-profit groups struggling in the community. For example, the Georgetown Highland Games, which celebrated its 36th season in this community in June, is a unique event that draws about 6,000 people annually. But this spring it was struggling financially, and urgently seeking sponsors. While the Town provides financial relief through the waiver of fees, what will council do if the GHG organizers come with tam in hand looking for a more substantial hand-out?

For a Town that always seems to be crying poor, and will have to borrow to pay for its new arenas, it's ironic that it seems to have plenty of money to loan out.

### WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to [www.independentfreepress.com](http://www.independentfreepress.com))

MTO Minister Kathleen Wynne has delayed a decision on the 4-3 highway to Spring 2012. Do you think...

- 1) This is just a ploy to avoid the provincial election campaign. (85%)
- 2) This is a genuine effort to study the issue thoroughly. (15%)

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Just when you thought late-night infomercials couldn't be any worse...



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## Letters to the editor

### Loan discourages competitiveness

Dear editor,

In my opinion the Town made a bad decision in extending a \$324,000 loan to HHGC.

Sports clubs operate in a very competitive market place— as do all small businesses. But the Town has now chosen to support one of these businesses to the immediate disadvantage of the new competitor which is offering similar programs obviously preferred by many residents; but also to the disadvantage of all other businesses operating in this space. And competitors may well ask what might the Town do next to protect its investment?

Sports clubs and for that matter dance clubs and other small businesses enrich our community. They should all be encouraged and supported— but on a fair and equitable basis.

John Crispin, Georgetown

### Can I have \$324,000?

Dear editor,

Why would the Town loan Halton Hills Gymnastics Centre \$324,000 to save it from going under, when in 2009-10 the centre received a

\$220,500 Trillium Foundation grant to hire a manager and purchase new equipment?

And in 2002, the club got another \$99,400 to purchase equipment and for gym programs. The management they hired didn't help circumstances to keep it afloat.

For Ann Lawlor to recommend to give the centre an interest-free loan with taxpayers' money is far from being a responsible councillor!

Now that the Town has made a commitment to one company, does this mean everyone else is entitled to the same?

Derrick Williams, Georgetown

### Questions ahead for the candidates

Dear editor,

I read with great interest about the new (Liberal provincial) candidate Moya Johnson and what she stands for. I thought she was running as a Liberal, but I must be wrong as everything she stands for is in direct opposition to Dalton McGuinty. I believe our Mayor has already approached Queen's Park on the hospital issue and was turned down flat.

Then she says she is against the new highway proposal. Well now has

she written a note to the minister denouncing it or does she just follow the Liberal line? The minister already knows after some 10,000 + protest.

Other than the all-day kindergarten, what else have they done?

I would like to ask her how she feels about the HST tax, the Eco Fees and the new items McGuinty added it on to, hydro rate increases (well I could write a page on that), hydro shipped to the U.S. and we paid them to take it, smart meters, lost Ontario businesses, increased cost of some blood tests for seniors, increased cost of some drugs for seniors and about 20 other items the Liberals have done to us.

Ross Webster, Georgetown

### Can European energy solutions work here?

Dear editor,

Being able to generate most of the electricity by the use of wind and solar power is a great objective. Denmark, Germany and Holland are often mentioned as leaders in that field.

All sounds great. However, will most of us be able to pay the hydro rates, as charged in these countries?

Denmark US \$ 0.4289 KW/H

Germany US \$ 0.3066 ""

Holland US \$ 0.347. ""

Marinus (Rein) Pater, Georgetown